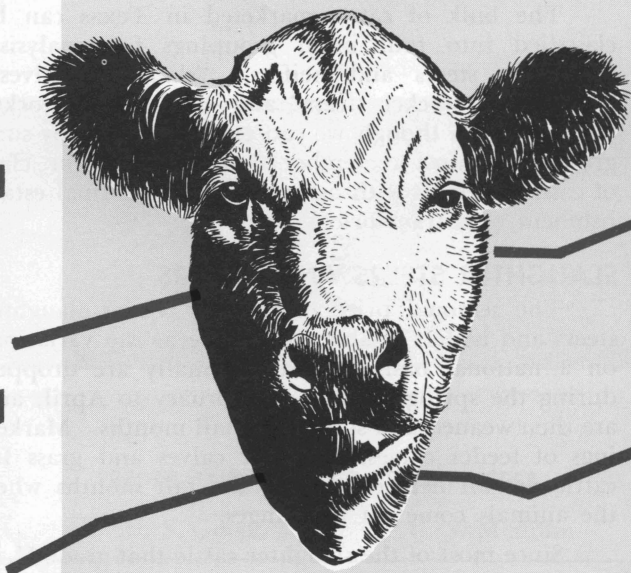


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# SEASONAL CHANGES in CATTLE PRICES



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
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# SEASONAL CHANGES IN CATTLE PRICES

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**P**PRICE LEVELS for cattle vary tremendously throughout the year, while the consumer demand for beef is fairly consistent. Price fluctuations primarily result from changes in the amounts of cattle marketed. Seasonal variations in quantities of cattle marketings are influenced by weather conditions, breeding dates, range conditions and production costs.

Farmers and ranchmen should know the pattern of the normal seasonal variations of cattle prices, since these are the best estimates that can be used in their planning for profitable livestock enterprises. Seasonal price charts included in this leaflet represent the 5-year average price at the Fort Worth Stockyards. The accompanying tables indicate which months had the highest or lowest average prices in each of the five years.

The bulk of cattle marketed in Texas can be classified into four main groupings for analysis—"slaughter steers and heifers," "slaughter calves," "feeder and stocker steers" and "feeder and stocker calves." Even though we can examine prices by such groups, we must remember that each type or class of cattle interacts with other classes in the final establishment of market prices.

## SLAUGHTER STEERS AND HEIFERS

The seasonal price pattern for Texas slaughter steers and heifers is about the same as the variations on a national basis. Calves normally are dropped during the spring months of February to April, and are then weaned and sold in the fall months. Marketings of feeder calves, slaughter calves and grass fat cattle are all heaviest during the fall months when the animals come off the ranges.

Since most of the slaughter cattle that grade U. S. Good or lower are also marketed in the fall of the year, prices for such grades are usually lowest during this period. Peak prices are reached in the mid-spring months, when marketings are at their low levels.

Higher quality feedlot cattle do not have this same type of seasonal rise and fall in sales, but the lower grade slaughter cattle marketings do tend to depress the prices of these better grades during certain seasons of the year.

The "two way cattle" or cattle capable of going for further feeding or immediate slaughter, likewise enter into the supply picture in determining the price levels for slaughter steers and heifers.

During the last 5 years, U. S. Good grade slaughter steers and heifers have reached their highest price levels most often in March, April or May, and dropped to their lowest prices in the late summer or fall months. Exceptions to this general price pattern can be caused by any strong change affecting the normal marketing season.

## FEEDER AND STOCKER CATTLE AND CALVES

With a general increase in the number of feeding operations and the growth of commercial feedlots, the demand for feeder animals remains fairly strong throughout the year. At the same time, the demand for stocker cattle to place on pastures and ranges is much greater in the spring months. The consequence is an exceptionally good demand for all types of feeder and stocker animals in the spring months with only a normal demand in the fall period, when the bulk of them are actually marketed.

Price levels of feeder and stocker cattle and calves likewise reflect this situation. The highest price levels usually were obtained during the spring months of February, March or April and the low price comes in the late summer around September.

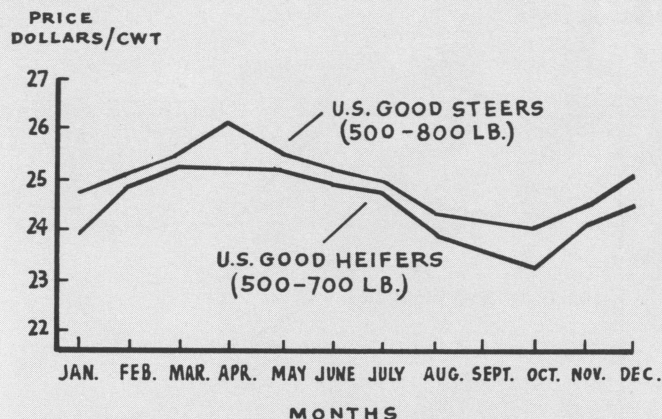
## SLAUGHTER CALVES

Unique to Texas, some parts of California, and a few southern states, is the slaughter calf trade. Animals for this market were originally grass fat or weaned calves with sufficient finish for slaughter. The increased demands of the growing populations, however, have rapidly expanded the requirements of this trade, resulting in more and more calves being fed for the slaughter calf markets.

As with calves being fed for heavy beef, the demand for feeder calves has become fairly consistent. Since slaughter calves are supplied both from feedlots and also from ranges and pastures, the heavy marketings of calves in the fall of the year cause the prices of slaughter calves to drop substantially. The low price level is usually obtained in September or October and the high price, sometime in March or April.

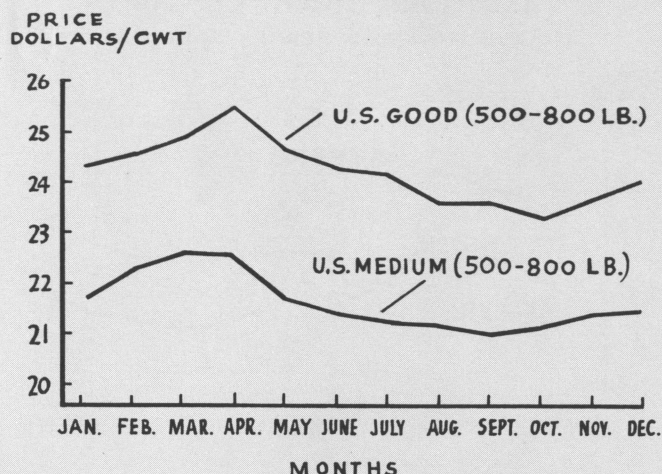
No class of cattle or calves has as much of a seasonal change in prices as slaughter calves. While U. S. Good slaughter steers showed an average drop of only 7 percent from their highest to their lowest months, U. S. Choice slaughter calves declined 11 percent. The market for slaughter calves, therefore, should be watched closely since price levels change rapidly.

## SLAUGHTER STEERS AND HEIFERS\*

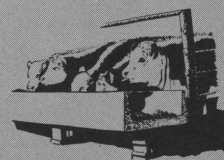


\* FORT WORTH MO. AV. 1958-1962

## FEEDER AND STOCKER STEERS\*



\* FORT WORTH MO. AV. 1958-1962



### SLAUGHTER CATTLE PRICES\*

Year	Steers		Heifers	
	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.
1958	Apr.	Aug.	Apr.	Jan.
1959	May	Dec.	May	Dec.
1960	Apr.	Oct.	May	Oct.
1961	Feb.	June	Feb.	May
1962	Nov.	Mar.	Nov.	Jan.

\*Steers—500-800 lb. Fort Worth.  
Heifers—500-700 lb. Fort Worth.

### FEEDER AND STOCKER STEER PRICES\*

Year	U. S. Good		U. S. Medium	
	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.
1958	Apr.	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.
1959	Apr.	Dec.	Feb.	Dec.
1960	Mar.	Aug.	Mar.	Aug.
1961	Feb.	May	Feb.	July
1962	Dec.	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.

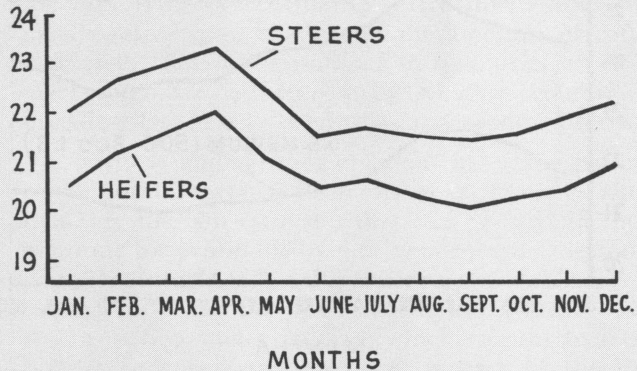
\*500-800 lb.—Fort Worth.



## FEEDER AND STOCKER CALVES \*

(U.S. COMMON AND MEDIUM - 500 LB. DOWN)

PRICE  
DOLLARS/CWT

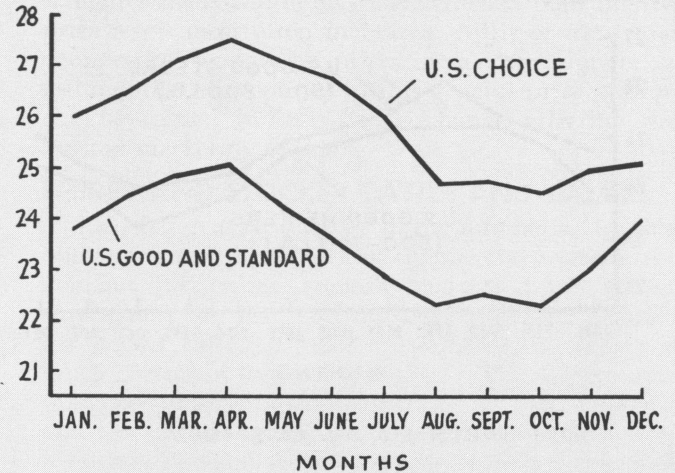


\* FORT WORTH MO. AV. 1958 - 1962

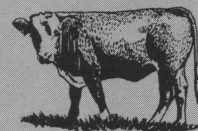
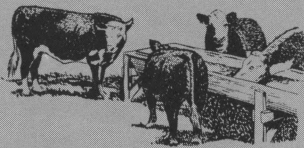
## SLAUGHTER CALVES \*

(500 LB. DOWN)

PRICE  
DOLLARS/CWT



\* FORT WORTH MO. AV. 1958 - 1962



## FEEDER AND STOCKER CALF PRICES\*

Steers

Heifers

Year	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.
1958	Dec.	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.
1959	May	Dec.	Apr.	Dec.
1960	Mar.	Sept.	Mar.	Sept.
1961	Feb.	Oct.	Mar.	May
1962	Apr.	July	Apr.	Aug.

## SLAUGHTER CALF PRICES\*

U. S. Choice

U. S. Good and Standard

Year	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.	Highest Monthly Av.	Lowest Monthly Av.
1958	Dec.	Aug.	Dec.	Aug.
1959	Apr.	Nov.	Apr.	Oct.
1960	Apr.	Sept.	Apr.	July
1961	Mar.	Oct.	Mar.	Sept.
1962	June	Feb.	Apr.	Aug.

